



TOWARD THE MARK

***“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”
PHILIPPIANS 3:14***

*A MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS
OF ALL AGES*

**July 2013
Vol.12. No.3**

July, 2013

Dear Reader,

“Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: [Forasmuch as ye are] manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:2–3).

This is what you are, dear Christian—an open letter of Christ for all to read. The writer is God; the ink is the Spirit of God; the subject is Christ. It is a delight for the blessed God that Christ would be revealed in us for all to see.

We should ever remember that Christianity is not a set of opinions, a system of dogmas, or a number of views; it is pre-eminently a living reality—a personal, practical, powerful thing, telling itself out in all the scenes and circumstances of daily life, shedding its hallowed influence over the entire character and course, and imparting its heavenly tone to every relationship which one may be called of God to fill.

I trust that you will enjoy the great articles in this issue during the summer months. It is our prayer that the Lord would use them for building you up on your most holy faith and help you to be established. Thank you for your e-mails and notes of encouragement. We love to hear from all of you.

Please keep praying for the Lord’s blessing on Toward the Mark.

Yours in our soon-coming Lord,

Emil S. Nashed

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Quotations from Scripture are generally taken either from the King James translation or the J.N. Darby translation.

MILK

"The truth shall make you free"

I was Afraid

"And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10).

Fear is the first effect of sin. Man is born with a dread of God, whom conscience regards now only as a judge. Sin produces fear and distance. The heart of man is alienated from God and beginning with fearing Him, he ends in hating Him. The great problem of the gospel is how to win the heart of man and reconcile him to God—to restore him to right relationship with Him, from whom he has "deeply revolted," in order to the accomplishment of God's purposes in respect of him, and the glorious destiny for which he was created. To this end—

- (1) his confidence must be won (Luke 7:37–38);
- (2) his conscience must be purged (Hebrews 9:4);
- (3) his state must be changed (Acts 15:9);
- (4) his soul must be saved (Titus 3:5);
- (5) his faculties must be renewed (Romans 12:2); and,
- (6) his future must be secured (Ephesians 2:7).

Hence we have 2 c's, 2 s's, and 2 f's; a *memoria technica*, to keep before us the plan thus proposed to follow.

(1) HIS HEART MUST BE WON

His confidence in God restored, and his sinful distrust of Him corrected.

"Conscience doth make cowards of us all"; and in that state man seeks only to hide himself from God. He only thinks of Him in the consciousness of his own sinful state, and he judges of Him by the evil that he finds within himself alone. The slavish dread

of God through sin is the inheritance of fallen man, and, as the "lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it" (Proverbs 26:28), so the offended Majesty of God becomes the object of hate to those who offend against it.

What, then, can restore the needed confidence in man, but love? Pure, perfect, divine love, exceeding all the sinfulness and aberration of the heart of man. To this end, therefore, Jesus came. He brought the knowledge of the love of God, and in His life on earth He showed the grace of God, so as to win the sinner's heart, and undo in it all that sin had wrought before. Adam hides in fear and shame from the presence of God. The woman of Luke 7 comes openly in the Pharisee's house, regardless of all shame, under the greater power of soul-need within, and the attraction of grace in Jesus without, and thus reverses the story of Genesis 3.

(2) HIS CONSCIENCE MUST BE PURGED

As the life of Jesus was needed to win the heart, the blood of Christ can alone cleanse from sin. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." Distrust of God is the ruin of *man*; sin is an offence against *God*. Grace may meet the one; blood alone can atone for the other. The life of Jesus is the vindication of the grace of God; the blood of Christ is the vindication of His righteousness, so that grace might freely act (Romans 3:25–26; 5:21).

(3) HIS STATE MUST BE CHANGED

But while the attitude of God towards man is thus expressed in the life and death of Jesus, **there must be wrought in man a corresponding change in his attitude towards God. His natural attitude is one of distrust and uncompromising hostility** (Colossians 1:21); and, in the very root and spring of it, this must be changed. **To this end Christ came incarnate, not only to express the mind of God towards man, but so to impress man's mind thereby, as to change the spring and tide of his thoughts towards God; to purify his heart by faith;**

and, as the magnet reverses its action in opposite poles, so the pollutions of sin that once attracted him are now repelled, and the purity of the presence of God that once repelled him becomes the delight and home of his soul (2 Corinthians 5:17–18).

(4) HIS SOUL MUST BE SAVED

And this is immediately connected with his salvation. **The grace of God brings salvation, and teaches us an entirely new order of living (Titus 2:11–12; 3:5). The whole circle of relationships towards God and man is changed, and now marked by sobriety, and righteousness, and piety.** The whole system of evil, in which the world is built up, is displaced by the true knowledge of God, and the soul is saved, from the domination of evil, to serve the living and true God.

(5) HIS FACULTIES MUST BE RENEWED

But not only so, his faculties also are renewed in the power of spiritual life. **It is forgotten sometimes that sin has ruined man in all his parts.** Now, by the Spirit, his mind is renewed, so that he can intelligently take account of his responsibilities and the obligations incidental to the system of relationships into which grace has introduced him; and thus prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2). **Moreover, he has “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16); and the new faculty which he now possesses is the capable instrument of all the expansion which his new powers demand, so that he is able, under the leading of the Spirit, to enter into the mysteries of the “deep things of God.”**

But not only is the mind functionally thus renewed, but also, in the very spirit of it (Ephesians 4:23), the same renovating power is operative; and, as the man is new (*νέος*), **so is he renewed (*καίνος*) in knowledge after the image of the Creator Himself, so as to enter intelligently into the apprehension of that world of universal blessedness, according to the glory of God, where “Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:10–11).**

(6) HIS FUTURE MUST BE SECURED

But what a future is thus assured to him! Present grace and future glory! Grace, that meets a man today where he is, in a world of sin, superabounding over it; glory by-and-by, in a world where all will be in accord with the essential nature of the Creator God, and in effect the full and unrestrained expression of His good pleasure. There, through succeeding ages, we shall be the examples of the “exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us, in Christ Jesus.”

Ephesians 1:19: the exceeding greatness of His power.

Ephesians 2:7: the exceeding riches of His grace.

Ephesians 3:19: the exceeding knowledge of the love of Christ.

The life of Christ wins the heart.

The death of Christ annuls the power of him that has the power of death, i.e., the devil.

The blood of Christ purges the conscience.

The resurrection of Christ brings deliverance.

The ascension of Christ gives the Spirit and power; and,

The return of Christ brings in the glory of the kingdom.

Edward Cross

MEAT

"Sanctify them by the truth"

The "Our Father"

The Lord's Prayer, as it is often called, the so-called "Our Father," nowadays plays an important role in Christendom. It is prayed on every occasion (e.g., in connection with the Lord's supper, baptism, sermons, funerals) — at every opportunity.

But, if we have a look at the prayers which are mentioned in Acts, we notice that the first Christians never used this prayer. And further, apart from the Gospels, it is never mentioned in the New Testament. How have we to understand this? Is the *Lord's Prayer* not good enough? Didn't He teach it to His disciples, saying, "When ye pray, say..." (Luke 11:2)? The propitiatory work of Christ had not been fulfilled nor had the Holy Spirit come to earth. That's the decisive fact.

The Lord Jesus had taught His disciples about the Father, and only He, the Son, could reveal the Father (Matthew 11:27). He had introduced them into the knowledge of the Father and had made Him known to them, so that He could say to His Father before His crucifixion: "And I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it" (John 17:26). **Therefore the question arose in the hearts of His disciples how they should pray. Because they had the impression that the old Jewish forms of prayer were no longer in accordance with their position as disciples of Christ, into which they had been put through the revelation of the Father, the Lord fulfilled their desire** ("Lord, teach us to pray," Luke 11:1) giving them this prayer, **which is not quite accurately called *The Lord's Prayer* or the *Our Father* (Matthew 6:9–13). Not quite accurately as the Lord Himself never uttered this prayer.** If anything is *His* prayer, then it is the one in John 17, where He as the Son talks

to the Father. Nevertheless I will use these terms for the sake of simplicity.

From the fact that the Lord Jesus gave His disciples this prayer we learn a very important thing. A prayer should always be in accordance with the revelation He has given of Himself. Or, in other words, the measure of revelation which God gives of Himself at a particular time is the basis of the relationship into which the believers have come and is therefore also the basis of their prayers. The kind of prayer is determined by the intimacy of the relationship which they enjoy through the grace of God.

This prayer, which starts with the words *Our Father*, was the suitable expression for the disciples, who surrounded the Lord as Messiah on earth and were already brought into relationship with the Father in heaven. We can be sure that they prayed it until the crucifixion of the Lord, although we have no information about that. They surely prayed this prayer each for himself, because a common prayer of the disciples is never mentioned in the Gospels. The *Our Father* was definitely not given as a collective prayer, even if it was in the "we-form," which only shows that others are also brought into this relationship with Him as our Father.

The Lord's teaching about prayer in Matthew 6:5–15, which is ended by the *Our Father*, only deals with the prayer in the closet—"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into the closet" (v. 6)—that point is usually missed. The *Our Father* is a personal prayer, not a collective one. But for us as Christians, who are brought into the position of sons of God, who have the Spirit of God in whom we say "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15), **the "Our Father" is not a suitable expression for our feelings and our thoughts.** It is our privilege to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus.

But we would like to point out some moral teachings of the *Our Father*. Even if this prayer is not intended for our

actual use, it contains some important points which are of great value for us, too.

The prayer consists of six requests in which we find six divine principles. This is their order:

HONOR	Hallowed be thy name
GOVERNMENT	Thy kingdom come
OBEDIENCE	Thy will be done in earth
DEPENDENCE	Give us this day our daily bread
RESTORATION	And forgive us our debts
PRESERVATION	And lead us not into temptation

What an accumulation of divine truths in only a few words! What a perfect pattern of a prayer from the lips of our Lord! How could it be otherwise, when He, the great teacher, teaches us! **We notice that the first three requests are connected with God, the last three with men.** Let's realize this: In the *Lord's Prayer* the rights of God have the supreme place, the needs of men come only second.

Isn't that a moral principle, which we should remember—not only in our prayers but also in our whole life—should not the things of God have the first place in our life and consequently in our prayers, too? “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). How sad to say that it is often the other way around! Apart from the moral principle which we see in this prayer may we ask ourselves, keeping in mind the first request: How important is it for us, that His Name be honored by us and by others? Is that the governing principle in our life?

The second request deals with His kingdom. Today, Satan, the prince of this world, governs this earth—and what terrible results this has for men! Have we not enough reason to be rejoicing that this will not last forever, and that God will assume His government on earth in the person of His Son? Are we longing for this moment, when His Son, our Lord, will

gain His rights here on earth and will restore everything in a way God ever wanted it to be? Are we among those “that love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8)?

And what does obedience to His will mean for us? Is it more important for us to obey Him than to please men? Have we learned yet that without obedience there is no blessing? Of course, the time when the will of God will be done in heaven and on earth is still future. Apart from the presence of Satan in heaven (Job 1:6–12; Revelation 12:7–12) the will of God is done in heaven, as the angels “do his commandments” (Psalm 103:20). But the earth is the scene of the self-will of men. **Therefore morally speaking there is a “partition” between heaven and earth. This partition will eventually be removed in the millennium, and there will be harmony between heaven and earth, because the will of God will govern in both spheres.** But today we are called “unto the obedience of Jesus Christ,” called to obey God as Christ obeyed Him. **The people of this world don't care about the will of God, but is His will governing at least our lives?** Are we willing to say in connection with our lives “thy will be done”?

Do we in our affluent society realize day by day our dependence upon God in all questions of our daily lives? Do we still give thanks to Him that He gives us our bread daily as well as all others things we need in this world? Are we thankful that we as children of God know the principle of restoration? If we fail through sin, God in His grace restores us again and again to the practical enjoyment of fellowship with Him. That is wonderful. But do we also have a forgiving spirit towards those who have sinned against us?

Could we pass through this evil world with all its dangers for spirit, soul, and body, and reach our destination unharmed, if we did not experience the perpetual preserving of God? But are we also aware of our own inability and weakness to stand in the trials into which God brings us (that is the meaning of temptation here,

because God does not tempt with evil; James 1:13)? **Or are we self-confident and trust in our faithfulness and experience? These are all heart-searching questions, and so this prayer is speaking to us, too, through the principles it contains. Indeed, we have much to learn from it, morally.**

I would like to add a word concerning the fifth request as it is often misunderstood, “And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” **We must remember that the Lord didn’t give this prayer to men in their natural, sinful state, but to His disciples, who were already believing. Unbelievers could never say “Our Father.”** The tax collector in Luke 18 could only say “O God” (v. 13). This request, “And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,” doesn’t show the way a sinner can obtain forgiveness of sin. No, the Lord speaks of the believer and the mind he ought to have if others should have sinned against him. In His governmental ways God wouldn’t answer a request in prayer from someone who has an unforgiving mind. How solemn is that also for us and our prayers!

We may utter all our faults and our daily failures confidently before our God and Father, but then we have to be in a forgiving spirit toward those who have sinned against us. We have a very similar word in the Gospel of Mark 11:25: “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses.” This passage deals with forgiveness in the governmental ways of God with His people, not with eternal forgiveness. May we therefore learn from the Lord’s Prayer this as well. **If we want our prayers to be answered, we’ll have to have a mind of forgiving mercy and mustn’t be filled with ugly feelings against our brother. The genuine Christian standard for our forgiving is, by the way, much higher than that of the “Our Father”; we should forgive one another “even as Christ forgave you” (Colossians 3:13).**

I hope very much that we have learned to see the difference between a practical application and the actual use of this precious prayer. As a pattern it is of utmost moral value for us, but as a prayer we as Christians cannot possibly pray it. It was and is determined for another time and for other believers. If we take the second request as an example: “Thy Kingdom come.” Apart from the moral application which I have tried to give, can we actually pray that request in our prayers? No, impossible! It would mean that we direct our view below and not above; that we were waiting for the coming for the kingdom in power and glory—and not for the coming of Christ, for the rapture of His bride. It would mean that we were waiting and longing for nothing else but the establishment of the kingdom. But that is certainly not the Christian hope. Therefore the prayer of a true Christian is not “Thy kingdom come,” but “Amen; come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

But how suitable was the request “Thy kingdom come” for the disciples at that time, to whom the kingdom had been preached as “at hand”; first through John the Baptist and then through the Lord Jesus Himself (Matthew 3:2; 4:17)! They were rightly expecting this kingdom. They couldn’t know yet that it would be postponed, because its king, their Lord and Master, would be rejected by His people. But the application of this prayer given by the Lord to His disciples is not the only meaning and application. When the assembly, which is being built today, will have left this world, there will be again a faithful remnant among the Jewish people here on earth. They will go through incomparable tribulation (Matthew 24:15), and at that time this prayer, the “Our Father,” will again be prayed, and certainly the second request, “Thy kingdom come” will be uttered with special fervor.

Coming back once again to the beginning of the “Our Father,” do not the introductory words “Our Father, who art in the heavens” (JND) indicate a kind of distance? The Lord had indeed tried to give His disciples an impression of who the Father was, so that they no longer knew Him only as “the Lord of

all the earth” (Joshua 3:11) or as “the God of heaven” (Daniel 2:18, 37). Nevertheless the Father is seen as in the heavens and those who are approaching Him are on the earth, at rather a distance, so to speak. At that time they couldn’t have that consciousness of His nearness, which is our privilege today. We are seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6) and it wouldn’t be appropriate in our position of nearness to the Father (Ephesians 2:18) to pray to Him as in the heavens.

We learn from all this, that this prayer, as perfect as it is in itself, can’t be the appropriate expression of those who are children of God and have known the Father (1 John 3:2; 2:13). They have the marvellous privilege of praying in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Christien Briem

Translated from German by Michael Vogelsang

Search the Scriptures!

1. How many years were the Israelites in Egypt?
2. What judge and prophet built an altar to the Lord in Ramah?
3. Which goddess had a great temple at Ephesus?

Exercise

“Exercise thyself unto piety”

This article was written by our beloved brother, Dr. Daniel Paterson, who went home to be with the Lord on June 13, 2013. Dr. Paterson was a mighty man of the Lord, an able teacher who had a unique gift for expounding the deep truths of God. I personally came to know and to love Dr. Paterson and his dear wife and I appreciated his teaching and ministry. He was a great encouragement to me when I shared my exercise with him to start the magazine, Toward the Mark, and he has contributed many articles over the years. I will miss him greatly for he was not only a teacher but a great spiritual father to me.
Emil Nashed

How the Lord stirred up the People

Readers will recall that consequent upon the writing of Jeremiah and the prayers of Daniel a small remnant of God’s people returned from Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. They were beset by many difficulties; strong enemies without and failing harvest and deep discouragement within. Ezra 4 tells us the sorry story of how the work of building the temple was made to cease. Under God, and doubtless also the exercise of godly men, the word of the Lord was brought to bear upon the situation. What was thought to be due to external pressure and circumstances was due to lack of heart amongst the people of God. Is it time for you to dwell in your own paneled houses and the Lord’s house to lie in waste? (Haggai 1:4).

The Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel and the spirit of the remnant of the people and they came and did work. There remained, however, some very real difficulties to face, both then and now, and the Lord’s answer, through the mouth of his prophet, must be of interest to us. It is not a little striking that this prophetic word came to the people of God on the 21st day of the 7th month. This appears to be the Old Testament equivalent of the last day of the feast when Jesus stood up in the temple (John 7:37). What should have been an occasion of the

greatest joy was darkened by the gloomy clouds of disappointment and despair.

The first of the difficulties was the smallness of the position. In Ezra 3:12 we read that when the foundation of the temple was laid many of the priests and Levites and chiefs of the fathers, who were ancient men, and had seen the first house (Solomon's), wept with a loud voice. The Lord **remonstrated**, "Is it not in your eyes as nothing" (Haggai 2:3). **Some may feel this also in their local gatherings. There is ever the danger of eulogizing the "good old days." But the prophet Zechariah (4:10) reminds us that we must not despise the day of small things.** When the earth is disquieted (Proverbs 30:21–23, and was it ever more disquieted than it is now?) the answer is found in smallness, in ants, conies, locusts, and spiders (Proverbs 30:24–28). **The three revivals of the Old Testament, it is worthy of note, became progressively smaller but better—Hezekiah's, Josiah's, and Ezra and Nehemiah's. Why are they better? It is because the Lord graciously says, "I am with you" (Haggai 1:13; 2:4); the smallness of Proverbs 30 is followed by that which speaks of Christ—the lion, the war horse, the he-goat, the king (Proverbs 30:29-31, JND). "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst" (Matthew 18:20). The prophetic answer to the smallness of the position is a consideration of the resources of God:**

- (1) the word (Haggai 2:5),
- (2) my spirit (Haggai 2:5),
- (3) the silver and the gold is mine (Haggai 2:8), and
- (4) the promise of His coming (Haggai 2:7).

The river of God is ever full of water (Psalm 65:9) "May we with this be satisfied, and glory in His name."

The second cause for discouragement, both ancient and modern, is the slowness with which blessing comes. The initial move for

God followed the prophetic word spoken on the first day of the sixth month (Haggai 1:1). By the 24th day of the 9th month (Haggai 2:18) there was evidently still some evidence of shortage. For the Jews this was a blight on material prosperity. With us the flow of spiritual blessing may not come at once. **Lessons on the principle of association have to be learnt (Haggai 2:10-14). The holy cannot make the unclean holy, but the unclean can make the holy unclean. A sound apple does not make rotten apples good, but rotten apples can make a good rotten!** Patient continuance with God is needed. Notice the emphasis in this section upon work—"Be strong" and "work." **There are two words for work in Haggai. In Haggai 1:14, the word is never used for servile work. In Haggai 2:4 it is more general, any kind of work. Brethren, we must work. Not only Joshua and Zerubbabel but also the residue of the people are included. In a similar way we can see that in the difficult days described in 2 Timothy there are the "others also". Even the smallest and humblest of us, at this late hour of the church's history, must do something.** We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which He has before prepared that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10). **In the pastoral epistles there are no fewer than nine references to good works.** "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). **Furthermore not only must we work but we must have "long patience" in waiting for the results.** Hudson Taylor labored (was it 14 years?) before there was one convert in China. But presently how the trickle became a mighty stream! In Philadelphia the Lord says, "I know thy works"—not incomplete works as in Sardis, but complete works, which He can fully approve. **The answer to the slowness of blessings is not to give up or give way, but to hold fast, and stand fast, and rely upon His promise. "From this day will I bless you" (Haggai 2:19).**

The final cause for discouragement, then, and always, is the strength of the enemies. In those days it was Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian (Nehemiah 2:19). Every servant and work for God has had to campaign against opposition; not a battle only, which may soon be over, but a campaign which continues to the end. **In a dark day the opposition is ever more intense. They that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). More and more we are brought to feel the pressure, and the prophetic answer to this situation is ever the imminent return of the Lord. In the light of the present situation and current events, how cheering is this word, “I will shake the heavens and the earth” (Haggai 2:21), a quotation which is repeated in Hebrews 12:26. “I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms” (Haggai 2:22). We know who sits upon the throne—the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan. He will be cast into the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:2-3). The strength of his kingdom moreover is in the hands of the beast and the false prophet, who will be cast alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). “The chariots and those that ride in them, and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.” Often in biblical history the enemies slay one another, as Jonathan proved (1 Samuel 14:20), Gideon (Judges 7:22), Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:23), Egypt (Isaiah 19:2), and even the Lord Himself (Mark 14:59). It would seem this is also the way in which Israel will be delivered in a future day. As to our enemies we are to “fear not” (Haggai 2:5). The scene will be cleared, but the scene will also be filled. “In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel... and will make thee as a signet...” This, though a personal communication to Zerubbabel, doubtless has a greater than Zerubbabel in view.**

Moreover, wherever a ring is mentioned in Scripture, a position of public dignity is in view. Pharaoh gave to Joseph his ring, Haman’s ring was put on Mordecai, and the prodigal

also had a ring given him. “What, know ye not that ye shall judge angels?” (1 Corinthians 6:3). The signet here not only indicates ownership but style. The new heaven and new earth will take character from Christ (everything exactly like, and according to Christ. What a scene!). **In Haggai 2:7 we learn that the desire of all nations shall come. We have to take this to be Christ. The words “shall come,” however, are in the plural.** Does this not tell us that not only Christ will come, but all that is Christ’s and according to Christ? **This is encouragement indeed. The days may be small, and the house nothing much to look at, but the latter glory of this house (the Millennial temple) will be greater even than Solomon’s temple.** “And in this place I will give peace,” in contrast to the battle of the present day. In truth we can sing: “With smiling face the Christian says, The best lies on 7before.” **Summarizing therefore, may we say that the answer to smallness is the resources of God; to the slowness of blessing, reliance upon His promise; and to the strength of the enemies, the sure and certain and early return of our blessed Lord. Even so come Lord Jesus.**

D.W. Paterson

Answers to Scripture search!

1. 430 years (Exodus 12:40).
2. Samuel (1 Samuel 7:17).
3. Diana (or Artemis) (Acts 19:27-28).

Rest

"Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"

He Himself Knew

When problems arise and we feel unable to meet them, it is a good thing to recall John 6:6—"He himself knew." Certainly in John 6 need had arisen, for "A great multitude followed Him." According to verse 10 about 5,000—and Matthew adds "besides women and children." **There He took control—"For He Himself knew what He would do."** But Philip suggests that two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient. Andrew comes in with, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes" and adds "but what are they among so many?" At this point in the story the Lord Jesus gave directions, "Make the men sit down." How beautiful the remark, "Now there was much grass in the place." The lad, evidently, was willing to hand over to Jesus what he had, and when Jesus had given thanks He distributed to the company. Verse 12, **"When they were filled" brings into evidence the sufficiency of the One who "Knew what He would do." He more than meets the need!**

Again, in the touching scene of John 13, **relative to feet washing, we have the expression "Jesus knew." verse 1.** He "knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." **His desire for them and for us was that we should enter into the joy of having "part with Him," entirely free from the defiling influence of this ungodly world, so that we might know and enjoy His blessed company, and the holy communications He imparts.** Fellowship with the Father and the Son is how John puts it in his first epistle, surely, the essence of eternal life.

Once more, in John 18:4, we have the thought of Jesus knowing. There because "Jesus Himself knew" He goes calmly forth to meet those who had been sent to take Him, he said "Whom seek ye"; they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied "I am" and "they went backward, and fell to the ground." Again He asks and again they reply "Jesus of Nazareth." Again the Lord replies, "I am [he], if therefore ye seek me let these go their way." Of those whom the Father gave to Him He would lose none. Surely, John 10:11, giveth His life for the sheep" comes in here? In this gospel we see the filling out of Genesis 22:8, "They went both of them together." How well the true Isaac knew, as witness His converse with the Father, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). **What immense depth is to be found in that, seemingly, simple expression, which heads this paper—"He Himself knew." What comfort to the anxious heart; what joy to the adoring heart, that in spite of knowing all, He "For the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).**

E.C. Brown

Storm Warnings

The deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history claimed the lives of as many as 12,000 people. Tragically, there was sufficient warning and ample time for evacuation; the warnings were simply not heeded.

Saturday morning, September 8, 1900, residents of Galveston, Texas awoke to find that the warnings were true. Over the next few hours, a monstrous hurricane cut their ties to the mainland, destroyed much of their city, and killed an estimated 8,000 residents. Galveston had come through storms before, and its people thought this one would not be any different. Even if the warning were true, they planned to get out at the last moment. But by the time the storm arrived, it was too late to escape.

For those who live in storm-prone areas, there is a risk of becoming desensitized by repeated warnings—especially when many of them pass without incident. Nevertheless, the danger in these powerful storms is still very real, and we are frequently reminded of just how tragic the results can be when warnings are not heeded, or when storms and natural disasters strike without any warning at all.

There is another type of storm which has been forecast for many years, but has not yet occurred. The storm of God’s judgment of sin is looming on the horizon, and this time the danger is not only of losing life and property, but also of one’s eternal soul. His Word, the Bible, is full of warnings about this storm. One is very clear: “Flee from the wrath to come” (Matthew 3:7).

Our sin has put us directly in the path of God’s righteous judgment. How can we elude the storm of His wrath? By following His escape plan. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, opened the evacuation route when He willingly died on Calvary’s cross and suffered at the hand of God, paying the penalty for our sins. Now we must realize our danger and trust Jesus to be our “hiding place from the wind” and “covert from the tempest” (Isaiah 32:2).

Perhaps you have heard this warning before and chose not to act on it. Do not let your heart be hardened by ignoring God’s Word any longer. Flee to Christ today! The danger is real and there is no time for delay; the time to escape God’s judgment is now. Turn to God and put your faith in the One who died for you and rose again. In so doing, be assured by God’s Word that your soul will be saved forever, and you will start a brand new life with God!

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life...**He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16, 18).**